

# Discovering Christ in Words of Faith: Poems



# Discovering Christ in Words of Faith: Poems

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Peter Menkin

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Caption for clover:

Leaf with raindrops by Rick White

Photo of author

Photo by Michael Menkin

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## Amusements Etcetera

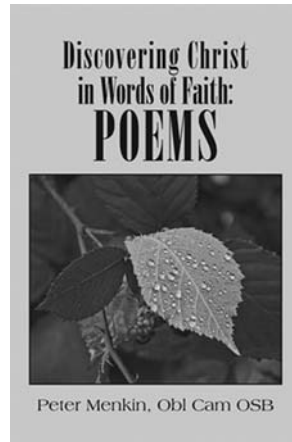
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Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.  
He existed before God made anything at all and is supreme over all creation.

Colossians 1:15 NLT







ETCETERA



## *Harmony of Seasons Turning Springward*

The February rains come down,  
light weight upon the land  
bringing sparkle, refreshment  
needed this season. The clarity  
in the air juxtaposes against  
the turn of season towards Spring  
as the feelings and signs awaken  
the sleeper in me, saying arise.

Yield I must to the rhythm of earth,  
desiring an open heart to mercy  
for others. This rain refreshes  
and aids the call to live; be  
swift my mind and intellect, gain  
the harmony of good weather, a gift  
for us this returning and renewal.



*Early Morning*  
(2000)

Startling reminder, ray point of light (star):  
come winter daytime,  
bring early morning to awaken anew before dawn, with life to arise.

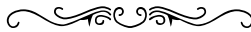
Stretch pearl luster and harken

with children, young parents, neighbors,  
and babies unborn asleep, resting in the womb

to come forth beginning.

The new day has intentions.

You Holy Spirit stir me, health and hopefulness restore.



## *All Souls*

Mary was a lovely girl, serene; so given to an open heart,  
Friend of God like Abraham, seminal archetype welcoming

The Holy Ghost. What comes here? Pentecost  
Days of spirits and united souls, saints in heaven and memories  
Of the dead. Where sorrow and pain are no more.  
Mystical Holy Ghost.

Steadfast, mystical body of thy son, what is the light that shines  
Perpetual, for You do support us all the day long.

In mercy we wait, we pray, we believe, Holy Ghost:  
Mary was a lovely girl, devout and promising woman of sorrows  
And joys.

Pentecost, how the Spirit did lead her to obedience  
By invitation of an angel of God. Mystical Holy Ghost.

What Spirit is this that leads her to the glorious company of?  
we pray in glory everlasting for all souls bask in that light,  
Renewing even the spirit of our minds, the Prayer book says.

Mary was a lovely girl, serene, so we turn to her life of joyful service—  
Pentecost. In the heavens and on earth, just a phrase that speaks  
Of memory where lives eternal lives the wonderfully created, renewed  
dignity of human nature.

Is this not a cross? The Dead, gone. Remembered this November  
Season of reflection and changing season. Follow Him.

Mary was a lovely girl,  
And in her joy she has done so, follow him,  
now in the company of all the Saints and Apostles.



# *Arrival*

*The light  
lit  
sung to  
Exsultet—  
Christ.  
Easter arrives.*



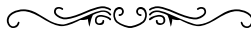
# *Morning before Winter: Awakening with Dawn*

This is another day of creation  
Birds are awake, sunrise comes  
Walkers are already out taking their morning stretch

Checking the morning sounds  
Knowing the week is awakening and the day is here

This is the day the Lord has made, let us be glad in it  
First prayer of praise and thanksgiving begins in looking forward and  
saying good morning

Act of recollection begins  
Catch fish of the mind



# *My Trip to San Francisco*

(prose poem)

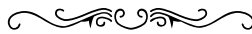
Here is an excerpt that describes the ferry ride to San Francisco from where I live. How beautiful this ferry ride is to San Francisco from the Larkspur terminal . . . a joy for many in the early morning before 7:30.

“How I get to San Francisco is a pleasure: I go by ferry, and my trip to the courthouse there is walk, bus, ferry, bus. Here is what the ferry ride is like: The approach into San Francisco is magnificent. One can begin to discern the skyline and buildings in the fog and mist about a mile out from the docking area at the San Francisco pier. The entire skyline is a white against the white fog sky. This makes it appear to come to the eye as if through a magical appearance. First there is the mist



and the fog, and then the eye catches a glimpse of something solid, or large and quite lovely behind and within the cloud. The shapes start to appear, and the patterns on the buildings themselves become apparent. The shades of the structures, their lighter or darker contrasting colors against the light morning mist of fog become a transformation of a visible glory that is just a small city, somehow reachable very soon across the water.

God is residing in the morning light of the new day, bringing a hope to man's edifice by painterly scene and the dawn of the day. I do enjoy this approach by water in the early morning as the ferry brings us all to our civil destination in safety and comfort. It is a thankful trip, and a peaceful one."



# *Visions of God's Presence*

An Interlude, an Invitation to Further Reflection

THIS IS AN ARTICLE IN POETIC FORM OF THE PASSION  
BIRTH AS PAGEANT

DISPLAYED IN WRITING ON THE SKY BY THE HORIZON.  
EARLY LIGHT HAS JUST

BEGUN.

AWAKEN, SLEEPER. PLEASE DO, DO THE INVITATION SPEAKS.

Some notes of

Advent through Epiphany, with the Star

in

the South ever bright before dawn. On a journey, and in search of  
the living God in Christ. To ascend.

Seeking the Glory of God revealed in the morning as a vigil and  
journal

in

Chronicle of light where the hidden sight of the

Almighty is

passing by with celestial ever present burning bright

pleasure in

Grace.

This is the American scene, here

in the West above the waters. The clouds above and yet this violet  
and purple so immense as to bring fear, and an awe.

“My ways are not your ways.” He is not in the lightning.

Look not there, but transfixed this is an imminence of recording  
the daily sight of the season as the rising *sun*,

oh, glorious is the dawn. This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us be glad in it. So the words are spoken.

*December 14:* Before dawn prayed to the appearance  
of the Lord as the Glory of God was revealed.

The sun to the East on the San Rafael Richmond Bridge  
enlisting the early light of the coming Christmas.

*December 15:* Lovely ride—Sunrise to the City of Hills  
started before the light  
brought the glory of God in majesty to the eyes.

How stratospherically sublime is this *vista*  
a full Bay and its islands encompassed by bridge passageways.

*December 20:* Caroling Sunday—morning

rose early as the eastern sun brought

the illumination to the interior as a Christmas blessing.

The Glory of God was evident in the a.m. before light,

as a star appeared above where below a searcher in his travels

danced a morning cry of supplication to the dawn.

*December 23:* We saw a vast purple range of majesty

on entering the environs. A bird migrating North

with other shapely winged angels in travel.

The light was not too bright. Thank you.

*December 27:* There was a purple sky

like a great beauty of *color*

across the sky hiding from me the presence of the Lord.

We passed a container ship on the ferry.

The picture of it included a sun coming up

behind the ship with the *San Francisco* Oakland Bridge,

edifice of strength and human imagination of industry

and the post modern reminder.

Christmas is here. Today is St. Stephen's Day.

*December 28:* A golden reflection appeared  
in the buildings in the distance across the waters.  
The sun rose brilliant yellow orange and the  
indwelling mystery of Christ was apparent  
at the beginning of the journey.  
A purple early morning light of sky was a comfort to the eye  
and shoreline we approached.  
This was a holiday pilgrimage of peace this morning.

*December 29:* The sense of the impending year of the Lord  
is close as I and others prepare for 72 hours of peace.  
How Christ and a year of Jubilee is so,  
what is essential in search for faith? We are tried as is gold  
in a furnace.  
The morning rose so grandly on the way,  
like a promise in good tidings  
as angels accompany us into this new millennium.  
By God's grace, I pray.

*December 30:* The early morning light was a purple  
joy of blanket over the eastern horizon

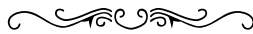
as a resurrection for the birth of Christ.

This is the sixth day, and there is a cross in the horizon  
that tells of our mortality and redemption. Lyric.

*January 3, 2000:* The clarity of the morning before dawn  
was illuminated by early morning travelers.

What gifts have we to offer, as the light shines.

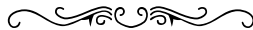
That star in the southern sky remains this morning.



## *Hours Before Dawn*

This morning in hours  
before dawn at 3:00 a.m.  
I wait like watchman  
for first light  
to know you, Lord, whom  
I wish to see this day.

May my creation, its preservation,  
and its work be for you, Lord,  
an act of gratitude and thanks  
for this life.



*Here is my consideration of a brief poem  
of waiting in a hospital emergency room.*

Here is my consideration  
of a brief poem of waiting  
in a hospital emergency room.

The man from the Veteran's Hospital  
was late, and the baby cried happily.  
Two children wore the doctor's bandages  
in the waiting room. Earlier at evening tide  
there was a quiet conference in the  
education center. The man who tiptoes  
through the tulips was pulling his car to  
the main door of Marin General when I  
arrived. The beep, the bio feedback, the  
numbers 106 over, 95 over, oxygen 96.



The heart is monitored by machines, the  
ticking clock sweeps from the hours through  
Evening Prayer, and the long explanation of  
conversation with God in a description begins.

Our Father, who, art in Heaven where the Lord  
lives. Hallowed is a joy to us in song and in the  
majesty of golden walls. Be thy name, a mystery  
unspeakable, a land and a place oh joy of hymn.

Thy kingdom, a tree where we abide and sing,  
along the branches like those whose life is tended,  
as the lily is beautiful so we are without anxiety in  
your Kingdom where there is clothing that we neither  
work nor labor and Come. Thy will, your will be done.

Me in thee and thee in me. On earth as it is in heaven,  
the cherubim and the archangels sing a constant hymn  
of song in worship and adoration in this holy spirit that  
yours is. Give us this day, to begin and say this is the  
day the lord has made, let us  
be glad in it. our daily bread to eat as a manna from  
heaven a promise of which we are not worthy, oh, I  
have denied thee, and loved thee, for you are a rest  
to me and a comfort. Forgive us as we ask this of you  
in your grace of giving this question to us this evening  
the hour turns towards nine o'clock and the doctor is  
waiting the nurses are coming. I am thirsty, and listening  
now in another room. As we forgive those who trespass  
against, for this is a prayer against another, in the wrestling  
that is our lives, in struggle and in toil, my heart beats,  
breath and practice bio feedback.

Us, whom we think about. The use of the hospital, the patients,  
the nurses, the paramedics who are in their blue uniforms.  
Cool and so well waiting. Someone has died. I sense it,

for I practice discernment, Oh Lord of my life, my love in  
testimony, I seek thee. Thou art here, where can I go from  
thy presence? For thine is the kingdom, and the power.

I meditate upon this and contemplate the beep of the system,  
the pressure on my arm, the woman with her husband, her  
marriage in Christ, and the closeness of their concern in  
love of waiting, the glory, oh, yes, thine is greater than the  
cosmos of imagining. A creation beyond of goodness, a place  
of beginning that is where the I am that I am for you have  
come across me and the saints are living presences among

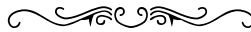
the waiting in the rooms curtained one from another. Forever  
and ever. Amen. I ponder, I contemplate, I look for meditation,

the baby is a joy to everyone. Whose heart is this saint's? A  
charity of visitation, a transfiguration of compassion, a

continuation

of a journey in prayer. The lady across the long room wants  
me to say confession for her.

Yours sincerely.



*January 25, 2010*

*I have waited on the Lord,  
In the stillness of my mind.  
In the music of a hymn,  
In a conversation with a friend.*

*It is in the loveliness of a flower,  
And the color of the light of day  
Lost in a prayer from the prayer book,  
I have waited on the Lord.*

*My friend, it is the pleasure of life,  
The knowledge in simplicity of knowing  
One another, and even the times that come looming  
To the psyche of trials and fears in a tunnel  
Where confinement of spirit and mind*

*Make the soul weep and wonder  
That there is comfort in knowing you  
Lord. Speak to my heart.*



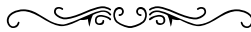
## *A Sacrifice of Praise*

As I prepare, I am  
praying in new understanding,  
How there is a deeper union.

Illuminated prayer, you reveal to me  
That I am received. How wonderful Christ's hospitality  
When I take the bread of blessing given.

Awaken this day, too, to the presence in God.  
An entry made by invitation, an invitation I know:  
There is the presence of God's statement. These  
Are moments made: Redemption of mystery.

I am here for the mystery: Paschal.  
I eat the bread. I take  
The cup. I drink the wine.



## *A Call to the Lord's Table*

This lost sheep needs to  
be taken home again, Lord.  
In music I and we call you.  
In song we sing a beckoning.



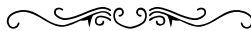
## *A Man Yearns for God*

Shall I be personal  
about it. *I have begged the holy spirit.*  
Lead me in reading the Bible.  
For my hope is in the Lord. Nothing  
matches for me this hope of knowing God.

I have implored the spirit  
of truth. *Reveal to me the Word*  
of God in the Bible.

I yearn, this is a man's  
truth.  
*to live the life—The promise*  
I want to have this language  
in my heart, in my mind, on my lips.

This is an earnest need:  
yearn.  
God chooses us first.  
We go to his call.





# *Festive May Night, Speak . . .*

Mask of life; death,

Wrought night black  
sparks with stars.  
Mysterious, longing  
to dance; part of the cosmos,  
my place is being  
masked yellow.  
Bright love, shine lamp.

Earthen pine tree,  
shields the raw  
roar  
of the beast;

also,  
friendly awesome  
leviathan at play.  
Dangerous. This May  
dance goes on. Bloom  
Spring.

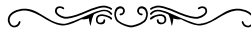
I live as a man.  
My eyes are blue,  
my teeth white, sharp,  
a hand drawn on forehead,  
palm open;  
this mask of May  
knows cosmic eternity  
as promise everlasting.

Speak night. Your speech.  
I hear.  
God draws me.



# *The Good Shepherd of His Flock*

Indwelling spirit  
instills the Christ  
in others. You carry  
with you the marks,  
the stripes, and give  
your life over to God.  
What you have is a dance:  
happiness, with discipline  
of kindnesses. You bearer  
of burdens, carrying them  
with others as we journey.  
You are priest, minister, pastor.



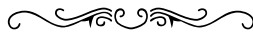
## *Speak to My Heart*

I have waited on the Lord,  
In the stillness of my mind.  
In the music of a hymn,  
In a conversation with a friend.

It is in the loveliness of a flower,  
And the color of the light of day  
Lost in a prayer from the prayer book,  
I have waited on the Lord.

My friend, it is the pleasure of life,  
The knowledge in simplicity of knowing  
One another, and even the times that come looming  
To the psyche of trials and fears in a tunnel  
Where confinement of spirit and mind

Make the soul weep and wonder  
That there is comfort in knowing you.



# *Relief from Burden and Grievings*

Sin is  
awareness that  
forgiveness offers  
the covetous,  
and a long list  
of human frailties more,  
too numerous to name  
relief from burden  
and grievings of the soul.

What to do with sins  
not in conscious.  
Do not fret, listen  
to your heart; be  
still and know  
that I am God. Live  
with sorrow, embrace  
joy, allow acceptance  
of the human, eschew  
evil. Know failure;  
willingly embrace  
humility. Tears.

Live life a friend  
said. Yes!

Garden variety, thorns,  
common knowledge, blindnesses,  
bring my misgivings  
to purity  
May I grieve You not.



# *The Courage to Pray Easter Prayers*

*Searching for the words, the courage*

*to pray enters my life. Like an arrow,*

*the declaration of thanksgiving comes*

*and I say aloud, moving my lips:*

*Like promise, like heart song, like breath*

*that is in me—speak. My friend the monk*

*advises: speak. So trying short notes,*

*with courage of soul, speak I do.*

*There is just the two of us; so I believe:*

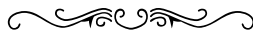
*God in Christ, Holy Spirit, for it is courage*

*brought to the self through the grace of God,*

*I pray. Like an arrow, the words go heavenward.*

*Peter Menkin*

*March 20, 2011*



# *Alleluia! Easter!*

*At the intersection of Easter*

*we wait with thoughts of new life,*

*the life of a baby, the life of the Baptized,*

*the life of the lamb, and the memory of slaughter,*

*of the death is fresh, but forgotten for the time*

*we say, He is risen! He is risen indeed!*

*Those bones, those bones, those dry bones*

*are linked, renewed, given flesh, given life.*

*More than renewal, like freshness, like birth . . .*

*Out of the tomb, white as lightning, transfigured . . .*

*we are mystified, believers, quiet in surprise,  
wondering at the miracle and hearing how the Apostles  
told their friends the tomb is empty.*

*He is risen! He is risen indeed!*

*The mind cannot fathom God's working, the promise,  
we go on with the tale, this myth, this story  
this reality after vigil, after waiting, knowing the end  
does not come, for from generation to generation the day  
is celebrated, as from everlasting to everlasting there is Christ.*



*Shall we say it the third time, Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy,*

*Lord have mercy. He is risen! He is risen indeed!*

*Alleluah!*

*Freely is the offer made, freely we take the body and blood,*

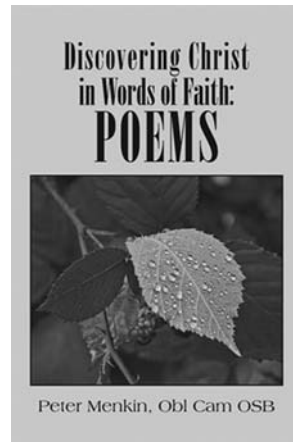
*. . . we bless you in this freeform of sentences, for our creation,*

*preservation . . . above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption*

*of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; we share in his victory over death.*







ETCETERA



*Early Morning*  
(2000) (revise) . . .

Startling reminder, ray point of light (star):  
come winter daytime,  
bring early morning to awaken anew before

dawn, with life to arise.  
Stretch pearl luster  
and harken with children,

young parents, neighbors,  
and babies unborn . . .



*January 25, 2010*

I have waited on the Lord,  
In the stillness of my mind.  
In the music of a hymn,  
In a conversation with a friend.

It is in the loveliness of a flower,  
And the color of the light of day  
Lost in a prayer from the prayer book,  
I have waited on the Lord.

My friend, it is the pleasure of life,  
The knowledge in simplicity of knowing  
One another, and even the times that come looming  
To the psyche of trials and fears in a tunnel  
Where confinement of spirit and mind

Make the soul weep and wonder  
That there is comfort in knowing you  
Lord. Speak to my heart.



## *Poem for Trinity Sunday 2000*

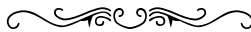
Oh, yes, you are so right about the morning  
I have found that there is this ongoing rising  
of the morning that breaks anew.  
Today was unlike that in no respect,  
other than the changes of location and the  
expansion of the spirit. I was surprised  
at the way that today was different from yesterday.

So I am not sure if you are talking about this morning,  
as in Sunday, or you are talking about Saturday morning,  
as in yesterday.

a lingo known to me but sadly not a written language,  
so I feebly clung to English, which I'd known but now forgot.  
No doubt about it, that lingo known is but sadly  
not a written language, and how to cling mightily so  
to English which I've known but forgot.

This chattering is more a song, a repose  
and a repast of sounding arise.  
A coming of the dawn to light, and awakening  
of the eye to the God of light.  
This Trinity of a mystery is more than a mere look  
and a day's journey, a conversation, and a  
serious note, it beckons us,  
it calls, it moves as these messengers  
illustrate to us their noted hidden love.

Sunday, June 18, 2000



# *Engaged in Le Milieu Divin, Lent*

In the zone  
where I know God's presence  
I recognize  
the outer darkness—

transfigure is the season's  
introduction  
to *Le Milieu Divin*.

Precarious habitation,  
there is the greater world  
where Christ is loci  
even in travails  
ordinary,  
extraordinary.

We are of substance  
existence, created believing—  
seeking. Fill my half  
heartedness; unbend me.

Before my trials of devil  
and insidious evil—the darkness.  
You are center point even of my despair  
inside me, outside entering  
transformation. You are Godhead,  
Trinity.

May I show penitence, everlasting  
one adored. Lent begins:  
Celebration.





*The Melody of the Bible*  
*Spoken and Said*  
(2000)

You cause my yearnings,  
speakers so fluid as doves  
lovely messengers, you bring  
me to desire the Gospel  
words that make  
New Testament.

Desire to hear of Him,  
those fruits given  
with mercy, healing  
in his blood,  
“joy for all the members  
in the sorrows of the Head.”

Such sounds man and woman  
speak aloud, the words  
of these sacred alliterations.

I want to hear you  
tomorrow  
read from the lectern;  
hear: alit with candles  
burning with life. Gift.  
Gospel.  
Church is for hearing  
the Word.



## *Ascension Day, No. 1 (2008)*

There is a church service of prayer—  
sing.  
Evening Prayer that festival day;  
we came as pilgrims in an expectation  
of a divine celebration. Grace.

Enter into the liturgy. Celebrate God.  
This dialogue in prayer and word.  
Song.

Oh, that he did rise—it was a hymn.  
When the Lord rose, He Ascended.  
Imagination, I was.

Inspiration.  
As melodious beautiful voices,  
a man ascending in this beauty.  
Of the beauty.

Making the beauty, bringing with Him  
the perfected human nature of this world.  
This is celebration.  
Divine.

God's gift.  
Man as a being of humanity.  
God's gift of celebration.  
Humanity.

Man and the divine.  
Mystery.  
This is the Christ.



*Finding Myself in Brethren  
in Lent 2000*

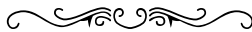
Where my self-forgetting  
Love is hid, I know—  
In my clinging to the Christ,  
In the cleft of the rock  
We are unto you all hearts  
Are open, no secrets hid.

I fathom on in my mortal  
Weakness seeking the heart.  
Again to witness my faith  
Knowing you are all—a Word.

New life is granted us, the me  
Of being in the following—  
The master to the body that  
is Him, incarnate, heavenly Church.  
Forgive my wretched masks, my  
Deceptions, my strengths of  
Bone, pride, and many wishes.

Complete me in prayer, and as  
A swift arrow, hear me, Lord.  
My life; I come.

—March 31, 2000

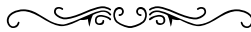


## *This Faith in God*

Our meditation moves  
to contemplation: today  
let it be unto me;  
so morning prayer starts.

I ponder my desire  
for release from earthly pain,  
find out about flesh again,  
discovering the Spirit  
holds other fruits: Wait  
on the Lord.

Can one know, glimpse—  
the great yes  
of vastness greater  
than mountains and hills.  
Creation, all being.



Discovering Christ  
in Words of Faith:  
**POEMS**



Peter Menkin, Obl Cam OSB

# INSTRUCTION



# *I Desire to See Good Days*

The sunlight, the hallowed  
event  
of everyday living.  
Reminder of Christ  
around us,  
before us, above us, below us.  
Peace, I seek the Lord's love.

Set out on this  
to see him  
who calls.



*Notes from the Study House  
in March (2001)*

The vine,  
virginal place within  
gateway to God  
ultimate  
Christ abiding.  
The master speaks  
of singing us forward  
within the paradox of intimacy.

To come back  
to mercy and pardon;  
return  
again like the prodigal son.

The progressive revelation  
of theology: God loves us  
in invitations  
for a climate to receive  
in trust.





*Notes from the Study House  
in March, No. 3 (2001)*

In God of God,  
beginning with the mnemonic—  
with Christ  
beside others.  
Around the Abba.  
The Alpha.

Tree of the Cross,  
giving voice to yearning  
within.  
The returning  
movement  
of intention to be  
with God  
the whole day.

The master says,  
“not to be habitually forgetful,”  
prayer of aspiration!  
Help me in this God.

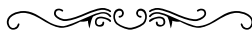
*Notes from the Study House  
in March, No. 2*

Living in ego  
as in anguish. Rest  
in the invitation  
of Christ. Strength  
remain in me. Pursue  
the pathway of the abyss.

Die and arise  
in the Lord.

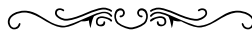
Master tells master, speak  
there is a yearning for joy,  
the deep radical need  
for peace; we  
are made for you  
O Lord.

From my notes  
in March, No. 2  
“the unconscious  
ongoing prayer  
is given voice  
by the conscious act  
of prayer.”



*No. 3, Conversation with the Holy  
Spirit Enveloping in Its Fellowship*

To be living with in  
living energy,  
life meaning mortal  
force—  
meeting eternal  
comfort that is fellowship  
of the Holy Spirit.  
Fire, awe, enveloping  
now.



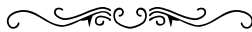
# *No. 1, Conversation with the Holy Spirit Enveloping in Its Fellowship*

Deep within us  
there is this moment  
of God.

Man's yearning need cries,  
calls, entreats with tearful  
need union of love  
to be.

An always speaking cry,  
a conversation,  
the Divine dialogue admitting  
dependence in Christ's charity.

The ongoing outflow—life.  
Fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
define moments of humanity,  
grateful, acceptance, sublime.

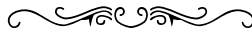


## *No. 2, Conversation with the Holy Spirit Enveloping in Its Fellowship*

Speaking these sounds, words  
as looking over the day  
I am in the moment alone,  
with You (me, existential time).

Somewhere the conversation  
of my heart gains comfort  
in the fellowship  
of the Holy Spirit.

Silent  
yet heard presence, gift  
of grace (evermore).





Discovering Christ  
in Words of Faith:  
**POEMS**



Peter Menkin, Obl Cam OSB

AMUSEMENTS  
ETCETERA





# *All the Gods on the Front Lawn*

(prose poem)

The blue truck is discernible now as part of the front yard garden. An old Ford with simple carburetor called a farm vehicle from 1965, the all steel monster filling the end of the driveway against the sidewalk and white picket fence is adorned with gods, figures, wicked and mean creatures of plaster and perhaps sculpted elves.

Mixed among the flowers by the walk, and towards the west where the mountains stand before the ocean begins is a lineup of gods like headstones for memory of previous tenants in this rooming house among the redwood trees. Are these the past lives, the left behind religious artifacts and special spirits and saints of residents gone sometime during the 30 years this house has been hospitable to people on a journey? Tiki is in stone, (white, black and white about three feet high). St. Francis and Cross is near the gate, about two thirds down the walk way (he looks just fine and there is more than one saint in beige like marble with or without cross).

No Benedict. Mary and maybe another Mary and a Martha and unknown but probably carried with them women of deep conviction seem planted like additional memories of gods and past lives adorning the local flowers as remembrances, and left behind items similar to forgetting a suitcase (these with hands in prayer and pink or light pink in color).

Inside the front porch is the last supper, a scene from the Upper Room (festive and in muted respectful blues and gold with grey). Right outside the front door, within the sun porch, sits a crucifix, like a real cross one would find in a small chapel somewhere stowed in a cabinet and left there with its presence reminding a past owner that the relic is a testimony of faith embattled, still giving hope and reminder of genuine faith (nearly brown with white, like wood, but made of some cast mix).

Are these the grateful dead monuments, leavings of discarded distractions worn away and dropped from sight, waiting like patient reminders that somewhere in the grape vine bush growing along the side of the blue Ford truck is a God I recognize familiar and known? Along the side about four feet up is a shelf holding on it like a boy's room holds favorite objects of sport and adventure for growing up with future promise sits aside other magical creatures: a brown frog (ugly mud of clay) with bow tie, series of overlarge pine cones still complete side by side, and some places plastic flowers from like an Easter the culmination of reminder that something passed this way before and went on elsewhere.

Forever with Easter. Simple rooming house resident gods and things of faith, maybe like an angel.

Unlike a grove of Redwoods, gathered together in a field or among a series of trees in a setting that the eye can discern as park like and ancient with resting spirits and reclining peace, these are remnants of the Saints and gods, spirits of the woods, and adornments of virgin games on large lawns and private fields, in small houses, escaped private disasters, desperate moments, hurt times, terrible love affairs despaired, last dollar in the pocket, place to rest and save money, just a good room with security and some peace, injured and aged or disabled in pain, come to rest and be dropped behind as collections that really make no rock garden and portend little of a goldfish pond with exotic fish.

An amalgam of spirits, an amalgam of some powerful presence, these adornments and sacred objects to someone also held in disrepute and disgust, stand with the knowledge that a jaundice of doubt has come upon some who are here with a strong hand. Maybe not so, for they seem to live as planted stones.

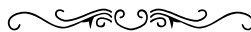
Are these the grateful dead of the past lives, question. I wonder, and I approach, and I recognize every now and then the quiet of the graveyard and the heart of memory that is a small thing of collections that makes the rooming house a home for the man who keeps the rooms available through the years.

There is a sundial against the big front room window, elegantly classic. And overgrown near the always open in the summer screen door to the sun porch patio is a series of dolphin sculptures like found in expensive tourist gallery shops in Sausalito for visitors to spend much money on and take as a statement of the male and female neptune, living gods within the pods of the ocean near the edge of this western area.

Magic, gods, saints, crosses, religious statements, funny creatures, many wicked, and a large mannequin with a hard hat reading across the front peace, wearing work gloves and a slinky evening dress, short like a sexy dancer about to rave or do the twist is another of the gods of a venus who was resident, or worshiper of same.

This is an unusual entryway of front yard within the confines of the neighborhood block, patiently alive and awake, sometimes asleep and reminding one that the angel's cherubim white with copper dragons above the front door intend to say the god of the Old Testament is here, too. Who could know the zen of followers of Jerry Brown, or a guru, or a struggling Catholic with a lot of love, or other mysterious statements about our only security is peace. One needn't subscribe to all these manifestations, elements, and quiet waiting memories that engage the passerby with the character of the rooming house since the front yard is always watered well and the statues of gods and saints seem well cared for in a distracted way of attentions.

This is the array of many protections invoked for privacy and retreat to the benefits of the roomers, who receive these gifts without additional charges to the usual rent and utilities.



## *My Father Who Played Badminton*

There is a story about the screenwriter  
 Who faced the multitude of inquiry, and  
 Regarded the ministrations of his soul in  
 Concert with others, in a group experience  
 That brought to the little houses and manifold  
 Riches of Art Carney and the cigarette smoking  
 Jackie Gleason a merry mailman on two mountains.

My father played badminton in the backyard and  
 Hunt and pecked a radio writer's dream from atop  
 The empire state building with a young man named Allen,  
 Died young. With a Josh White on radio gramophones, and  
 Guy Lombardo with continuity through the Death Valley Days  
 And Ronald Reagan. This Highway Patrol of Ziv grade b was  
 Always an experience of Steve Reeves proportion, brought to  
 The candy counter heaven of the green ring wearing producer's  
 Wife and the May Bomb of writing old for the likes of Sean and  
 His comic duos who grace the pages of the puzzle writer's  
*Dream People* magazine, and *TV Guide* with the *New York Times*.

WBAD New York, Philadelphia, across the Appalachians to a  
 Signal of more than 40,000 watts of broadcasting power to the  
 Delight of Westinghouse and staff names not forgotten in old  
 Alpine racing cars and house large in Westchester or Pacific Palisades.  
 From the streets of New York City, there were the loves of charity  
 In the beneficence of the Red Cross, and lighthouses for the blind  
 And sighted. This was my father before and after the tribunal of  
 The 50s, with *Let's Make a Deal* and Hollywood after the purge  
 Of ABC, NBC, and the CBS Network with national correspondents.

This ode of remembrance of makeup and the theatre from the Elementary level of youth to the wonderful voice of the Cantor Was and is a *Life* magazine picture of Universal Fame and Hollywood Bungalows. Do you like your milkshake: Chocolate. Do you like the pier, Oh, yes. What is a Wyoming memory and a few stand up moments for Reruns and Perry Mason and the guy who did it as *The Bounty Hunter*: Dead of a magical mystery tour towards survival and another ride on a Motorcycle like a movie star in a sports car race of Paul Newman Skill.

The child actor still lives, though *Make Room for Daddy's* little boy Is gone and the remembrance of Sunset Strip and the foo foo is still Yet to come, even to the likes of Broadway and comfortable seats of Writer's Guild screenings on a summer's night with Billy from Superman And the pretty girls who never stop coming to visit: Ah, stardom the Lot man let us in and the walk along the route is always a game of Waiting and using a Royal Typewriter to hear the bell ring to bring in The money in Guild time, residual after residual after residual so that The Shadow Knows, oh yes Kimo Sabe Tonto is the masked man's friend.

Father's Day 2000  
Marin County, California  
Sunday, June 18, 2000



# *Here Is A Work In Progress: About The Dance*

Giselle is a ballet of love. She becomes distraught and stabs herself with Albrecht's sword, and sinks into madness. She collapses and dies. Buried in a forest, close to a lake, her lover Hilarion comes to grieve. He dances in grief until exhausted and cast into the lake, that is where he dies. Albrecht, too, comes to the darkness of the forest, where broken by the first light of dawn he, too, is overcome. At the end his love for Giselle leaves him weeping at her grave. He has danced and he does dance to exhaustion. So his presence is revealed.

Tonight the ballet, through the storm  
And with some delight in the practice  
Of movement that belies the interval  
Dance, oh, this is a balanced pattern  
Of set and good company.

The ushers are willing to show us  
To our seats, with special tickets of  
The set builder, the curtain puller, the  
Carpenter's wife girlfriend to company.

When shall this modern dance of California  
This modern dance of San Francisco,  
This choreography of shadow and lithesome  
Classical movement in man and woman  
Begin to tell story. We begin to gather  
As the winter storm this week brings a large  
Sky in some splendor and dread to the City.  
Magnificent, so clear in the interlude of  
a winter storm.

Gathering we. Oh, Lord, our God, who are  
Amid the dancers in their presence before you  
How kind they move to the music of orchestral  
Reverberation in the golden walled palace  
On the Coast near the Pacific Ocean. What story  
We look forward to in the movement of the limbs.

A concert of sound and movement, with a designed  
Backdrop of sets constructed  
so overlarge and spare.  
In their lighted scenery to display the colors of the Many players who  
come to perform  
for us this evening.

Move dancers, dance dancers, lift, and turn, and go  
On with the youth of the strength that we share among Us.  
As audience, as visitor, as lover  
in the times of our  
Lives. We seek the sublime in this elision statement  
Of the majestic movement with sound and story. Gladly.

The San Francisco Ballet. What wonderful company  
On a stormy, wet, and El Nino driven evening. Respite.

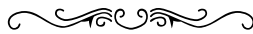
The musicians will play. We will gather in our listening  
To a congregation of observers, partakers, waiting for  
The love of the body in movement before the Almighty.  
In this season of the turn towards  
Spring and all that  
Means for Lent is near  
and Epiphany remains this week.

For mindfulness of the presence mankind  
offers in an Homage of disciplined lives  
for the sake of their artistic  
Sense in a life we do share with you dancers, dance for us.

Dance for yourselves, and among yourselves, with your troupe,  
To be a part of this dance and this music is what we can find  
For ourselves in the darkened theatre, in companionship.  
And good tidings, with pleasures of the aesthetic joys.

Thank you for the gift you bring us in music, sound, light  
And the stand upon the stage so large to be seen by us  
With grateful minds and good concern  
for what you bring  
Us in the beauty of your enjoyment in love for this practice.

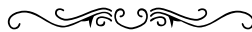
In dance, oh, yes we go on with our tickets to our seats: visitors  
And participants in this act of the ballet.





## *White House Rose Garden*

We the people dream  
you live sometime in rest  
visiting the rose garden  
at the White House, Mr. President,  
part of a Presidential  
spirit that lives with almighty  
and ancient strengths brought  
to new world refreshment,  
a hope that is America's  
desire for reason. Civilized  
republic and visions  
of history. More than one  
man of power living common  
desires for a better world  
tended by providence's hand.  
The great spirit of nationhood  
comes upon the country  
this season again, again.



# *Summertime Talk in Color and Sand . . . .*

Speaking words that come out color,  
visible  
as in round circle of blue  
like the clear Caribbean sea  
this  
summertime conversation  
spoken against the clouded sky;  
words about our lives  
held together by sunset,  
light  
changing the green trees  
ours  
tall challenge at days end  
during friendly conversations  
dimensions  
radiant orange enlarging  
between a man and woman.  
To blend with the white sky  
we speak admitting mortality.



## *The Opossum That Came to Visit*

Tilde was a girl opossum who lived under the back porch of the house at the end of the road and then a left turn into the drive and a walk of 100 feet to the steps that led to the front porch. She had been living there since summer began. Tilde was a pretty opossum to other opossums and had a keen sense of sight—for an opossum. That's what the cats that lived in the house said about her. They also said that she was one of the homeliest creatures they'd ever set sights on; and in their conversations about Tilde, whom they liked to talk about since she was new, they never once questioned where she came from or where she might be going. For all intents and purposes, Tilde was there and had set up housekeeping.

One thing this meant, since Tilde liked a little snack now and then, was she had nibbles available to her when the cats weren't around. At night, Tilde left her cool spot under the porch, where she had a chair and a table and a small radio which got most of the local stations and went out through her front door at the side opening of the porch and right onto the roof of her house (the people in the house called her roof their back porch), where she found a nice plate of nibbles that the cats had left. But Tilde wasn't always so lucky to find a full plate of nibbles.

The raccoons who lived around the house often came at night and in their noisy raccoon way made quick eating of the nibbles. Tilde, who was an opossum who liked things the way things should be, and that meant quiet and under her control, especially on the roof of her own house, considered the raccoons, fat things that they were she often thought, a nuisance. She planned to put out a jar of peanut butter and leave it for them to eat during one of their greedy visits and relished the idea of their getting peanut butter stuck to the roof of their mouths. The idea of it brought an uproarious laugh to the whole area. But Tilde didn't care who heard her. She was willing to let it all hang out, and it felt good. "That will teach those raccoons to fool with my plate of nibbles in the middle of the night," she thought to herself.

She almost hugged herself with glee when she thought again about the peanut butter she was going to set out for them. “What’s the point of all this?” Tilde thought to herself after she considered putting out the peanut butter, while at the same time relishing the idea of two fat raccoons licking the roof of their respective mouths and wishing they had some water to wash away the peanut butter. “What is the point?” she reminded herself assertively, for Tilde was an assertive opossum. “The point is that this place where I live is a veritable Garden of Eden, and the nibbles a part of the fig tree—fruit for my day.” It was in fact a favorite part of her day because at night she could venture out and make a stop along her travels, which she liked to do, and between looks at the moon have some nibbles. So Tilde decided to put up a sign, one the raccoons could read.

You can see a copy of the sign Tilde put up on dirt path by the drive to the front steps of the house, near the underneath way of the porch. You probably can’t read it. Tilde knew what it said, and certainly the raccoons knew what it said.

When Tilde was writing for them, she kept thinking that maybe it would be better to make a similar, more direct sign—something with a straightforward message like “Keep Off the Grass.” But no, that wouldn’t work because the raccoons never keep off of grass anywhere if they want to talk on grass. In fact, in Tilde’s first summer, she’d heard the mice that lived in the house say that the raccoons were perfectly happy not only to get on grass, but also to dig up grass. Of course, there wasn’t any grass for digging up around the house, except down by the creek. Nonetheless, this was getting off the subject; and if there was anything Tilde was good at, it was getting off the subject. She decided on the sign that you see when you go by the house near the drive. We’re getting to the end of our story, so to make a long story short, Tilde didn’t succeed in keeping the raccoons from the nibbles. But she did succeed in making a very nice sign, which the raccoons commented on and spent some time looking at. In fact, the sign was the talk of the raccoon community, which she heard when they started their usual pushing and shoving each other around. The sign stood all summer long. And Tilde often had nibbles on her moonlight walks, by the way. After all, the raccoons left some. And no, she never did get around to putting out the peanut butter, so fortunately that part of her plan was just a passing thought.

